

Amendment
Application No. 10/743,421
Attorney Docket No. 032204

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): An optical element having a plate-like shape, which comprises a light-transmitting resin and minute regions, said minute regions being dispersedly distributed in said light-transmitting resin and having a birefringence different from said light-transmitting resin, wherein at least one of said light-transmitting resin and said minute regions contains at least one luminescent material;

wherein said at least one luminescent material is a fluorescent material that absorbs any one of ultraviolet light and visible light and emits visible light.

Claim 2 (Cancelled)

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): An optical element having a plate-like shape, which comprises a light-transmitting resin and minute regions, said minute regions being dispersedly distributed in said light-transmitting resin and having a birefringence different from said light-transmitting resin, wherein at least one of said light-transmitting resin and said minute regions contains at least one luminescent material;

~~The optical element according to claim 1,~~ wherein said at least one luminescent material is a phosphorescent material that absorbs any one of ultraviolet light and visible light and emits visible phosphorescence.

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Claim 4 (Original): The optical element according to claim 1, wherein said minute regions are made of any one of a liquid crystal material, a material in glass state that is formed by fixing a liquid crystal phase upon cooling, and a material that is formed by crosslinking and fixing a liquid crystal phase of a liquid crystal monomer upon irradiation of energy rays.

Claim 5 (Original): The optical element according to claim 1, wherein said minute regions are made of a liquid crystal polymer that has a glass transition temperature of 50t or higher and exhibits a nematic liquid crystal phase at a temperature lower than the glass transition temperature of the light-transmitting resin.

Claim 6 (Original): The optical element according to claim 1, wherein the following expressions (1)-(3) are established for refractive index difference between said minute regions and said light-transmitting resin:

$$0.03 \leq \Delta n_1 \leq 0.5 \quad (1)$$

$$0 \leq \Delta n_2 \leq 0.03 \quad (2)$$

$$0 \leq \Delta n_3 \leq 0.03 \quad (3)$$

where,

Δn_1 : refractive index difference in an axial direction of the minute regions, along which a maximum refractive index difference occurs

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Δn_2 : refractive index difference in an axial direction orthogonal to the axial direction along which the maximum refractive index difference occurs

Δn_3 : refractive index difference in an axial direction orthogonal to the axial direction along which the maximum refractive index difference occurs.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): A polarized-light-emitting surface light source comprising an optical element having a plate-like shape and a light source that emits light of a wavelength that is capable of exciting a luminescent material contained in said optical element, said optical element comprising a light-transmitting resin and minute regions, said minute regions being dispersedly distributed in said light-transmitting resin and having a birefringence different from said light-transmitting resin, and at least one of said light-transmitting resin and said minute regions contains at least one luminescent material;

wherein said at least one luminescent material is a fluorescent material that absorbs any one of ultraviolet light and visible light and emits visible light.

Claim 8 (Original): The polarized-light-emitting surface light source according to claim 7, further comprising a light guide member for guiding light emitted from said light source to said optical element, said light guide member being made of a light passing material.

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Claim 9 (Original): The polarized-light-emitting surface light source according to claim 7 comprising an electroluminescence element.

Claim 10 (Original): A display unit comprising the polarized-light-emitting surface light source according to claim 7.